GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:212
ANSWERED ON:06.08.2001
DEFORESTATION OF HIMALAYAS
SUDARSANA E.M. NATCHIAPPAN

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of deforestation of Himalayas and the extent to which it has affected the ecological balance of North India so far;

(b) whether the Government have taken any steps to prevent deforestation of Himalayas; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R.BAALU)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF PART (a) to (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 212 FOR 06.08.2001 REGAR DEFORESTATION OF HIMALAYAS

(a) Forest Cover is assessed biennially by Forest Survey of India. There are 77 districts, having elevation more than 500 meter above sea level in the hill regions of the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttaranchal adjoining the Himalayas. These districtshave shown a net increase of 460 sq. km. between 1997 and 1999 assessments. No specific study report is available about the exact effect of change in forest cover between 1997 and 1999 on the ecological balance of North India. However, the change in forest cover affects the ecological balance including soil erosion, water table, rainfall, fauna and flora.

(b) & (c) The important steps undertaken by the Government to prevent deforestation are:

i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State Governments/UT Administrationsfrom their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.

ii) Externally aided projects are being implemented for development and preservation of forests.

iii) Guidelines have been issued to all States/UTs to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests.

iv) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest land for non- forestry purposes.

v) A net work of protected areas has been established.

vi) Ministry of Environment and Forests has prepared a National Forestry Action Programme to enhance the contribution of forestry and tree resources for ecological stability and people centered development through increased investments i n conservation and development of forest resources.